

A CRUEL OPERATION.

THE PROCESS BY WHICH TORTOISE SHELL IS PROCURED.

Fires Set on the Living Turtle to Separate the Bony Layers of the House in Which He Lives - A Business That Struck an Observer as Heartless.

There are many articles of daily and hourly use constantly passing before our eyes and through our hands about the production of which we know comparatively little or nothing. An interesting example of this is tortoise shell, from which combs and hairpins are made, besides a multitude of trinkets for the dressing table, the desk and the pocket. Fierce cruades have been instituted in recent years against the slaughter of birds for the procurement of their plumage for hat trimmings, and yet I venture to say that the process of procuring tortoise shell is a cruelty to animal life which far exceeds that to which birds are subjected.

In the eighties I happened to be down in Bluefields, on that awful Mosquito coast, and at the invitation of one Manuel Latona, who was the owner and captain of a small schooner, went with him to the cay El Roncador for tortoise shell. This cay gets its name (which in English would be the Snorer) from the exceedingly angry surf, which can be heard for a long distance breaking over the reefs. This is the cay on which a couple of years back the historic old ship Kearsarge was wrecked and battered to pieces. El Roncador is nothing more or less than a typical coral island, such as is found throughout the southern seas, three-quarters of a mile long, perhaps, and not more than a quarter of a mile across its widest part. Surrounding the island is a reef, inside of which the water is smooth and rather shallow, and at the bottom of this shallow water there grows a peculiar kind of sea grass which is a dainty food for the turtle tribes. There is also found on the top of the water inside the reef a sort of small blubber fish, called in Spanish *dedales*, or *thimble fish*, which is perhaps the greatest delicacy of the entire turtle menu.

The turtle whose shell is valued in commerce is a small species known as the hawks bill. There are other varieties which come to El Roncador to spawn, but they are not molested. During the night the turtles crawl up on the shore to lay their eggs, each female depositing on an average about 70. To do this they dig holes in the sand about two feet deep and after laying the eggs cover them over so deftly that it is almost impossible for a novice to find them. These eggs are really delicious when roasted, but the turtle fishers are careful not to destroy those they do not take for food, so as to promote as much as possible the increase of this valuable sea reptile. At night the fishers conceal themselves along the shore as well as possible, and when the turtles come up out of the water on the beach they rush forth and turn them over on their backs with iron hooks, leaving them secure in this position until morning.

The tortoise shell of commerce is not, as is generally believed, the horny covering or shell proper of the turtle; it is the scales which cover the shield. These scales are 13 in number, 8 of them being flat and the other 5 somewhat curved. Four of those that are flat are quite large, sometimes being as much as 12 inches long and 7 inches broad, nearly transparent and beautifully variegated in color with red, yellow, white and dark brown clouds, which give the effects so fully brought out when the shell is properly polished. A turtle of average size will furnish about eight pounds of these laminae, or scales, each piece being from an eighth to a quarter of an inch in thickness.

It is the method by which these scales are loosened which is the repulsive part of the business. The turtles are not killed, as that would lead to their extermination in a very few years. After capturing them the fishers wait for daylight to complete the work. The turtles are turned over again in their natural position and fastened firmly to the sand by means of pegs. Then a bunch of dried leaves or sea grass is spread over the back of the turtle and a fire is kindled. The heat is not great enough to injure the shell, merely causing it to separate the joints. A large blade, very similar in shape to a chemist's spatula, is then inserted horizontally between the laminae, which are gently pried on the back. Great care must be taken not to injure the shell by too much heat, and yet it is not forced off until it is fully prepared for separation by a sufficient amount of warmth.

The operation, as one may readily imagine, is the extreme of cruelty, and any turtles do not survive it. Most of them do live, however, and thrive, and a time grow a new covering, just as man will grow a new finger nail in case of one he might lose. The peculiarity of the second growth of shell, though, is that instead of reproducing the original number of 13 segments it is stored in one solid piece.

To see the operation of taking the shell from the living turtle once is to see a man of northern breeding and of it, and if the helpless reptiles and the power of voicing their fears under their cries would not be a heartless business as man has yet engaged in.—New York Post.

Impossible in His Case.

Hungry Higgins—I see the paper says we oughtn't to never begin a journey before breakfast.

Wesley Watkins—Does it have any advice for us blokes that has to make a journey to find the breakfast?—Indianapolis Journal.

The most scientific forester in Europe says that the oldest trees in northern Europe are the pines of Norway and Sweden, and that these are not known to live more than 570 years. Germany's oldest oaks lived only a little more than 300 years.

MILLERSBURG.

News Notes Gathered In And About The 'Burg.

Mr. Dave Conway is in Cincinnati, this week, on business.

Miss Julia Evans is visiting her mother and sister in Georgetown.

Hickston creek was higher here Sunday than it has been for nine years.

County Attorney Denis Dandon, of Paris, visited friends here, Saturday.

Mr. Ernest Thorn, of Cynthiana, was the guest of relatives here, Saturday.

Miss Julia McClelland, of Lexington, was the guest of Mrs. Caleb Corrington, Saturday.

Mrs. Anna Thoruton went to Paris, Saturday, to visit her daughter, Mrs. John Connell.

Mr. Leonard Drain, of Eminence, was the guest of his daughter, Mrs. Frank Miller, Friday.

Mrs. Jas. Cummings, of Maysville, was the guest of relatives here, Friday and Saturday.

The County School Association will meet here, Saturday, at the public school building.

Mr. Whittington Mann, of Paris, was the guest of his aunt, Mrs. W. M. Miller, yesterday.

Mr. Wm. Milam, of Maysville, was the guest of his daughter, Mrs. H. H. Phillips, yesterday.

Miss Mattie Power was home Saturday from her school to see her mother, who is now improving.

Mr. Fred Martin, of Wilson's Bottom, near Maysville, is the guest of Mr. Frank Herbert, near town.

Miss Bessie Ashurst, of the M. F. C., was the guest of Miss Bessie Redmon, from Saturday until Monday.

Mr. Royce Allen entertained about thirty of his young lady and gentlemen friends, last Friday night at tea.

If you want anything in the house-keeping line be sure to call on J. T. Hinton. He can suit you and save you money.

Mrs. Louis Rogers, of Cane Ridge, visited relatives here yesterday. Miss Lillie Boulden, of Lexington, accompanied her home.

Mr. Joe B. Purnell and son, Master Reynolds Purnell, of Bowling Green, Mo., were guests Saturday and Sunday, at T. M. Purnell's.

NOTICE.—Any person, or church, wishing to give "The Old Maids' Convention," a church entertainment, will address, Mrs. R. M. Caldwell, Millersburg, Ky.

About twenty Old Fellows were down from Paris, Thursday night, to assist in conferring the degrees on Kirby Denton, of Riddles Mills, and to partake of a banquet.

Master Walker Morrow, son of Mrs. Morrow, the matron at the M. F. C., fell down stairs with a pitcher of hot water and severely scalded one hand and his right leg.

Messrs. Chas. Martin and Letton Vimont have returned from a fox hunt in Mason. They report plenty of foxes and fine sport. They were guests of Mr. Jeff Arthur while there.

Sam Ross, colored, and John Jackson, colored, who enlisted in the United States army five years ago, returned Saturday on a three-months' furlough. They have enlisted again for three years.

Rev. Father T. S. Major, of Frankfort, will deliver a lecture in Millersburg, on Feb. 11th, from the subject, "From the Army to the Altar; or Why a Confederate Soldier Became a Catholic and a Priest." The proceeds are for the benefit of a Confederate orphan daughter.

Among those who attended the funeral of Miss Kate Parnell, whose remains were Saturday interred in the Millersburg cemetery, were: Judge W. M. Parnell and daughters, Misses Mary and Jeanie Parnell, and son, Mr. Littleton Parnell, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Forsythe, Mr. and Mrs. June Payne, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Beeding, all of Paris, and others.

Mr. C. W. Howard and wife entertained the business men of the 'Burg, Friday evening, it being the fifteenth anniversary of Mr. Howard's starting into the grocery business in this city, and by close attention to business, fair dealing and politeness, he has met with much success. The guests were royally entertained to an elegant supper in Mr. and Mrs. Howard's new home which was but recently completed.

Cancer Of the Breast.

Mr. A. H. Crausby, of 158 Kerr St., Memphis, Tenn., says that his wife paid no attention to a small lump which appeared in her breast, but it soon developed into a cancer of the worst type, and notwithstanding the treatment of the best physicians, it continued to spread and grow rapidly, eating two holes in her breast. The doctors soon pronounced her incurable. A celebrated New York specialist then treated her, but she continued to grow worse and when informed that both her aunt and grandmother had died from cancer he gave the case up as hopeless.

Someone then recommended S.S.S. and though little hope remained, she began it, and an improvement was noticed. The cancer commenced to heal and when she had taken several bottles it disappeared entirely, and although several years have elapsed, not a sign of the disease has ever returned.

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OLD TIME MELODIES.

SONGS THE DARKIES USED TO SING IN THE OLD SLAVE DAYS.

Negroes of the Present Day Cut Them Into Scrappy Discords—"Massa Will" Visits Old Mose, and Together They Recall the Happy Old Times.

The old time plantation songs of the slavery days, have about passed away, and the negroes now cut the original melodies into scrappy discords and minor notes. A negro had rather strike a minor note than to rub the waistband of his pants against a well filled table and eat. It seems that the peculiar tone holds a fascination for him which cannot be overcome. There is always something to interest you when you can hear a genuine old time plantation song as sung by the aged slave negroes, when heart and soul are united in the song.

I have spent many a pleasant hour listening to the quaint songs of an old gray headed negro on my grandfather's farm as he would rasp the screeching chords in accompaniment on his banjo. When he would sing, he would get a humming start with the chords, and begin with a long drawn out note, rear way back, pat his feet and shake his old gray head. He enjoyed singing, and I enjoyed listening. I would take him little pieces of colored paper and all the colored glass I could find to get him to sing for me and to repeat the far famed verse of alliteration, "Did you ever see a possum in a papaw patch a-pickin up papaws and a-puttin 'em in his pocket to make a papaw pie for his papa?" This is the joy of his life, and it never grew old or tiresome to him to repeat it.

Mose was his name, and not long since I concluded to pay him a visit and to hear again the songs I had so enjoyed when a child. I found his cabin and he was at home, being unable to get about much. I shook hands with the honest old negro and sat down. The light which came into his face showed how welcome I was, and we had a long talk.

Finally I asked him to take the dusty banjo from the wall and give me a few strains of "Nigger Foot In Ashes" at a lively clip. He did as I asked, and the old time vigor came upon him again. After playing awhile I asked him to sing me the corn shucking song the "niggers" used to sing while they danced the "rabbit dance," after the corn was all husked and the white folks had gone to bed. He was in fine spirits, and with his head way back on his chair and his feet extended to keep time with the banjo, he sang:

"Early one mornin on my massa's farm—
Cut dat pigeon wing, Lizzy Jane!—
I heard dem chickens a-givin de alarm.
Shake yo' feet, Miss Lizzy Jane!
Shake yo' feet, niggers; it'll soon be day.
Shoot along lively, Miss Lizzy Jane!
Massa ketch us damin, there, — to pay!
We got to dig taters and hoe 'em, — to pay!
Hit dat dubble shuffle, Lizzy Jane!
You'd better be a-humpin, coz it soon be mornin.
Shake dat balmoren, Lizzy Jane!"

After Mose finished singing this song an eight inch grin played across his face from ear to ear, his eyes sparkled and the old negro was happy again as if the young folks had gone through their dancing while he sang. He said, "Massa Will, de best days ob de old nigger's life am done gone, but when I think ob de good old times we had befo' de wah dese bones ob mine gits young, and I want to git right up and hit de jig step 'gin like I use to do."

I told him I was something of a dancer myself, and that if he would cut down lively on the old "barnyard circle" I would show him a few steps in jig dancing. This tickled the wrinkled faced coon, and he sang and played in earnest:

"Rooster in de chicken coop-crowin 'fo' day.
Horses in de stable go nay, nay, nay,
Ducks in de yard go quack, quack, quack,
And de goose goes filley-flee!

"Pigs in de pen keep a-squealin 'fo' slop,
Big dogs barkin like dey never will stop,
Guinea in de tree go pot-rack, pot-rack,
And de goose goes filley-flee!"

I stopped him because I was out of breath, and he laid back in his chair and laughed till his sides were aching. I pulled out a rabbit's foot and tossed it to him, and the effect was magical. He jumped "three feet on a rise and six feet on the stretch," and gave a whoop which was equal to a Comanche chief's. After his fright was over he told me, whatever I did, not to put any more of those hoodoos on him. I did not intend to frighten him, but wished to see if the superstition he had possessed in his young days had departed from him. I gave him a shining dollar for scaring him so, and he was himself again. We had a fine time in the few hours I had staid with him, and I asked him to pick up his banjo again and play and sing the tune he used to call "Mr. Kimble."

His bony fingers raked across the strings again, and he sang the quaint song I had enjoyed often when a child:

"You can't guess what we had fo' supper—
Cum a rop-strop-bottle, Mr. Kimble!—
Black eyed peas and bread and butter.
Cum a rop-strop-bottle, Mr. Kimble!

"Beefsteak, ham and mutton chop—
Cum a rop-strop-bottle, Mr. Kimble!—
Make a nigger's lips go flippity-dop.
Cum a rop-strop-bottle, Mr. Kimble!"

"And after each verse he sang the chorus:

"Keemo, kimo, kilgo, kayro,
Fleero, filo, flavoray!
Rop-strop-erwinkle, little yaller booger!
Cum a rop-strop-bottle, Mr. Kimble!"

"Though age had left its telling mark on the person of Mose, his rich voice was as clear as a bell, and the minstrel of today cannot equal it for genuine melody. I was not anxious to leave him, but the day was far spent, and I had several miles to go, so I bade him goodby and left the faithful old servant with tears streaming down his husky face. He laid his rough hands on my head and blessed me, saying, 'Massa Will, I'll soon be over dere in de land ob Canyan, but I'll remember de visit to my dyin' day.'—Louisville Courier-Journal.



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